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Title: Listen: Secret city babies Birth certificates from the Manhattan Project era listed a number, not a place

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Listen: Secret city babies

Birth certificates from the Manhattan Project era listed a number, not a place

In the Lab's beginning, Los Alamos was so secret that in some cases it didn't even exist. Driver's licenses, death certificates, incoming mail – and about 300 birth certificates of the babies who were born here during the Manhattan Project era. These official documents just listed an address: P.O. Box 1663.

Take a look (photo below) at a copy of one of these birth certificates and listen to **Alan Carr**, the senior historian at the Lab's National Security Research Center (NSRC), and **Jim Kunetka**, an book author and expert on Los Alamos's wartime history. They discuss this anomaly in Episode 2 of the Relics podcast series.

Inside the episode

Between 1943 and 1945, hundreds of young couples had moved to Los Alamos. They were among the thousands of scientists, engineers, military members, and other staff creating the world's first atomic bombs, known as the Manhattan Project.

Today, the copy of one of these birth certificates is part of the collections in the NSRC. Here, collections containing millions of nuclear security materials are housed, along with unclassified artifacts. Fascinating finds are down every aisle and around every corner in the NSRC. They include reminders that while people were making history here, they were also living their lives.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE STATE OF NEW MEXICO—DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Bureau of the Census
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

File No. _____ Registrar's No. _____

1. PLACE OF BIRTH:
(a) County Sandoval
(b) City or town Rural
(If outside city or town limits write RURAL)
(c) Name of hospital or institution: U.S. Engineer HOSP.
(If not in hospital or institution give street number or location)
(d) How long was mother in hospital or institution before delivery? 30 hours
(e) How long was mother in this community before delivery? 19 months
(Specify whether years, months or days)

2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER:
(a) State New Mexico
(b) County Sandoval
(c) City or town Rural
(If outside city or town limits write RURAL)
(d) Street No. P.O. Box 1663
(If rural give location)

3. Full name of child
3. Sex Female (a) If so—born list
4. DATE OF BIRTH
5. Number months of pregnancy 9 MOS.
6. Month October 7. Day 9 8. Year 1944

FATHER OF CHILD
9. Full name _____
10. Color or race White 11. Age at time of this birth 23 yrs.
12. Birthplace Denver, Colorado (City, town or county) (State or foreign country)
13. Usual occupation Engineer (If no Social Security No.)
14. Industry or business _____

MOTHER OF CHILD
15. Full maiden name _____
16. Color or race White 17. Age at time of this birth 24 yrs.
18. Birthplace Trinidad, Colorado (City, town or county) (State or foreign country)
19. Usual occupation Housewife (If no Social Security No.)
20. Industry or business _____

21. Parents' mailing address for registration notice:
22. P. O. Box 1663
23. Santa Fe, New Mexico

24. Date filed October 26, 1944
25. Registrar's signature [Signature] M. D. NEWBORN Date signed 20 Oct 44
26. Date on which given name added _____ by _____ Registrar Address P. O. Box 1663, Santa Fe, N.M.

27. I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child who was born _____ at the hour of 3:55 P. on the date above stated and that the information given was furnished by _____ related to this child as _____

28. State of New Mexico () as:
County of Santa Fe ()

29. I hereby certify the within and foregoing to be a true and correct copy of an original certificate filed with the State Department of Public Health of the State of New Mexico. Witness my hand and the seal of said Department this 14th day of November, 1944.

By: Rosina Gonzales Senior Clerk [Signature] State Registrar, Santa Fe, New Mexico

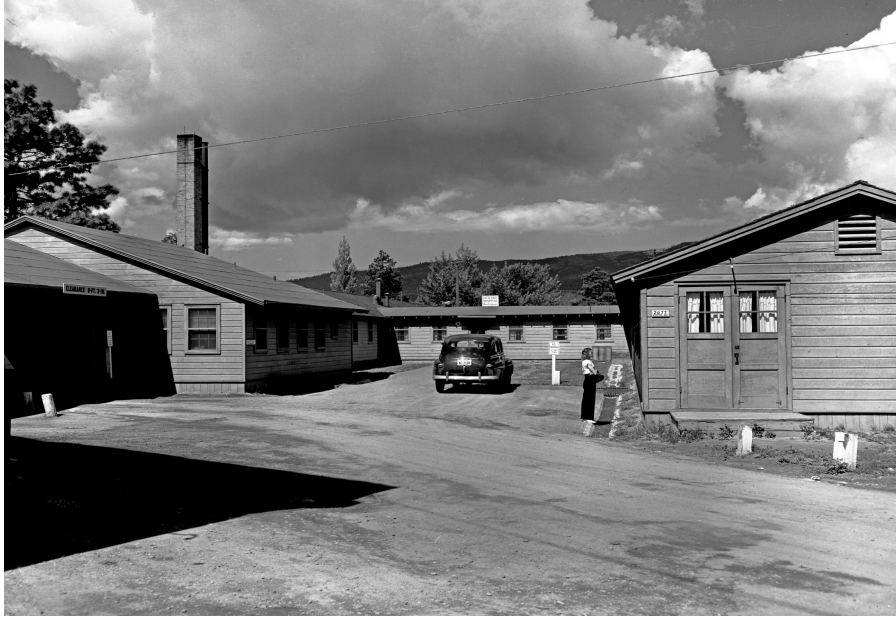
THIS CERTIFICATE IS DUE TEN DAYS AFTER BIRTH

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EJE-B19Xr_fYlJY4WuNuUlaQgXveFZKS/view?usp=sharing
caption:

The birth certificate of a baby girl born in Los Alamos during the Manhattan Project era lists her birthplace only as "P.O. Box 1663." Official documents from 1943 – 1945 used this number rather than name Los Alamos, in an effort to not draw attention to the town and its secret war-time mission. A copy of this birth certificate is part of the collections of the Lab's National Security Research Center. Personal information has been redacted.



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w9LEp5AI7KAqVXiWa6CknB3x5PegJt7c/view?usp=sharing>
A look inside the reception area of the Los Alamos hospital in the 1940s. The town's facilities were constructed quickly as the population swelled from just a boys' school and a few homesteads to thousands of staff and their families.



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UQnzMa6B8qRzHXB5domf0A1kixW8pOw5/view?usp=sharing>

This photo from the National Security Research Center shows the Los Alamos hospital in 1948, three years after World War II ended with the successful development of the world's first atomic weapons. The bombs were created at Los Alamos from 1943 – 1945.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13cs3L557ibpVqNOymqZIKsjM2qSU70hs/view?usp=sharing>

This photo from the National Security Research Center shows a nurse and her patient at the Los Alamos hospital in 1946, not long after World War II ended. Thousands of scientists, engineers, other staff and their families had moved to Los Alamos in support of the Manhattan Project. This was the U.S. government's clandestine mission to create the world's first atomic weapons to help end World War II.